

Gloucester City Council

Meeting:	Council	Date:	23 March 2023
Subject:	Continuation of the Gloucestershire Economic Growth Joint Committee beyond 31 March 2023 for a further temporary period		
Report Of:	Leader of the Council		
Wards Affected:	All		
Key Decision:	No	Budget/Policy Framework:	No
Contact Officer:	Jon McGinty, Managing Director		
	Email: jon.mcginty@gloucester.gov.uk	Tel: 396200	
Appendices:	None		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To consider a request to extend the operation of the Gloucestershire Economic Growth Joint Committee (GEGJC) beyond 31 March 2023 for a further temporary period and to delegate authority to the Head of Paid Service to amend the Inter-Authority Agreement (dated 4 September 2014) accordingly.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Council is asked to **RESOLVE** to:

- (i) Agree to the GEGJC continuing to operate from 31 March 2023 for a further temporary period as agreed at the GEGJC meeting on 9 February 2023, and
- (ii) delegate authority to the Head of Paid Service in consultation with the Leader of the Council to agree the length of the extension and complete the appropriate legal documentation to allow the Inter Authority Agreement to be extended beyond 31 March 2023.

3.0 Background

- 3.1 On 4 September 2014, all Gloucestershire Authorities entered into an Inter-Authority Agreement (IAA) to establish the Gloucestershire Economic Growth Joint Committee (GEGJC). The purpose of the GEGJC was to work collaboratively on economic development across the county and to administer the Strategic Economic Development Fund (SEDF), created from Business Rates Pooling arrangements. The initial term for the GEGJC was five years to end in September 2020.

- 3.2 Council considered and approved a report in July 2020, extending the operation of the Gloucestershire Economic Growth Joint Committee (GEGJC) for a period of 18 months to expire on 4 March 2022. Members will note that the decision in 2020 removed the requirement for 12 months' notice for any future changes to the agreement.
- 3.3 Members will recall that a year ago, on 24 March 2022, Council considered and approved a report to extend the operation of GEGJC for another year to 31 March 2023.
- 3.4 Implicit in both the previous extensions agreed was the need to review the operation of the GEGJC and whether it remains the appropriate forum to consider joint working on economic development and managing the funds held for that purpose generated by the Business Rates Pooling arrangements in the county.
- 3.5 Gloucestershire Local Authorities considered the future governance arrangements for leading economic growth in the county at its Leadership Gloucestershire meeting in June 2021 and has progressed discussions at subsequent meetings in 2021 and 2022. Those discussions have been shaped by first the delayed publication of the 'Levelling Up' White Paper (eventually published in February 2022) and subsequent Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill currently progressing through Parliament.
- 3.6 Future arrangements centre on the Gloucestershire City Region Board, which has never yet actually met, partly due to protracted discussions about governance arrangements.
- 3.7 However, at the time of writing this report, it is anticipated that the GEGJC will consider and agree outline governance arrangements for the Gloucestershire City Region Board and administration of the SEDF and establish a timetable for replacing the GEGJC.
- 3.8 Whilst a future report to Council will set out the new governance arrangements for agreement, this report seeks only to extend the life of the GEGJC by a further temporary period to allow arrangements to be finalised. A resolution from each local authority will be required for a further extension prior to the end of March 2023.

4.0 Alternative Options Considered

- 4.1 To not agree to extend the IAA to enable the Joint Committee continuing beyond 31 March 2023. However, this will result in there being no other formal joint decision-making arrangements in place across Gloucestershire local authorities to promote economic development or to manage the funds generated by the Business Rates Pooling arrangements in the county.

5.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 5.1 To enable the Gloucestershire Economic Growth Joint Committee to continue to operate beyond 31 March 2023 until new Gloucestershire City Region Board arrangements can be established.

6.0 Financial Implications

- 6.1 The inter-authority agreement between the Councils provides for the administration costs of the Gloucestershire Economic Joint Committee (capped at £5,000 per annum) to be paid from the Strategic Economic Development Fund.

(Financial Services have been consulted in the preparation of this report)

7.0 Legal Implications

- 7.1 The IAA no longer includes a provision requiring 12 months' notice being served by any of the partner authorities to any proposal to extend the life of the committee. Therefore, it is permissible to extend the agreement if all the Gloucestershire local authorities agree.

(One Legal have been consulted in the preparation of this report)

8.0 Risk & Opportunity Management Implications

- 8.1 The proposed extension of the IAA beyond 31 March 2023 to enable the Joint Committee to continue to operate for a further temporary period does not present any particular risks to the authority.

9.0 People Impact Assessment (PIA)

- 9.1 The proposed continuation of the Joint Committee beyond 31 March 2023 will not have any significant equality implications therefore a PIA is not required.

10.0 Other Corporate Implications

Community Safety

- 10.1 None

Sustainability

- 10.2 None

Staffing and Trade Union

- 10.3 None